

★ 50 YEARS ★

Some Personal Recollections and Reflections

WHAT BEGAN in September 1974 as a bibliography of Grand Canyon geology went on to consume a good part of my life. It's been an interesting evolution.

The bibliography soon was all-encompassing, containing *everything* concerning the Grand Canyon *and* the Lower Colorado River country from Glen Canyon Dam to the sea. The ever-expanding volume appeared in paperback in 1981; in concomitant loose-leaf, microfiche, and digital disk versions in 1990 and 1993; as an interactive database online from 2000 to 2021; and as several ballooning editions of a book-format, searchable PDF file first on CD and DVD disks (2012, 2015) then downloadable from a website (2019, 2022, and 2025 forthcoming, with liberal reproduction and fair use provisions to encourage its use and longevity). This personal essay follows the many lives of *Bibliography of the Grand Canyon and Lower Colorado River*, which now flourishes in multiple volumes as [THE GRAND CANON](#).

The inspiration for this work came when I returned from my second trip to the Canyon. I had visited both rims that year (in May and August), including on this second trip a three-day hike to Phantom Ranch and back on the North Kaibab Trail, a drive to Point Sublime, and a night drive around through Jacob Lake and Cameron to a South Rim arrival after dawn. There I had purchased a copy of William J. Breed and Evelyn C. Roat's newly published *Geology of the Grand Canyon*, an early contribution to the large library I unsuspectingly was to collect. I thought it would be convenient to have a more comprehensive bibliography for Grand Canyon geology, so the book's own citation and selections from its cited references got it started.

I was beginning a second year studying geology at Rutgers University. While I had had a growing interest in "rocks" since middle childhood (the clambering on them was at first more interesting even while pretending to study them), this was my first immersion into the subject as a science. I had been more interested in astronomy and space exploration for a longer time (I'm still interested), but in the face of less-than-stellar math ability I was going to ground, as it were. And in the previous year as a volunteer in the geology and paleontology department of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia I had been exposed to a new thing—the annotated bibliography, which so fascinated me that I took up its methods. (Twelve years later

I went to work in the Academy, remaining for 19 years in several collections-management and publications positions, concluding as the institution's archivist, then I was an archivist for 14 years in the American Philosophical Society's research library, also in Philadelphia.)

There had been “something about” the Grand Canyon that had attracted me for years, even before I had ever been there (nor did I know anyone who had, who might have regaled me with their experience). Now I had performed a geological rite of passage by hiking to the bottom and back—and the collision of place and print had occurred. I started with 4 × 6-inch index cards (ruled, yellow, purchased in a stationery store, which dates myself). Little did I realize what I was getting into. As one of the Academy's curators had recently explained to those who might think of being a registrar of things, “One does not simply sit down and prepare [a catalog].”¹ I found that it was necessary to occasionally catch more than the geology, and it became more than an occasional thing. I also learned that for sharper perspective I needed to go beyond the simple citation. So it began.

The Grand Canyon had become a consuming personal interest. I was, however, just one of a legion who admits to being enthralled with the Canyon and its river—and one of a fewer but unaccounted number who confesses obsession with them. Yet in the summer of 1974 I did not yet know of the players who had participated in the history of this place. They were beyond the geological world I was chasing, but I would soon enough catch up with them.

I sheepishly admit that on neither of my passes through Grand Canyon village that year did I know of Emery Kolb's “picture show,” about his photo-run with brother Ellsworth down the Colorado in 1911–12. The film is said to be the longest-running film ever, until Emery's death in 1976.² My limited rimside wanderings did not pass by Kolb Studio. I was camping and did not spend much time in the commercial part of the village. Two years later Emery died, aged 94, before I could return to the Canyon. When I did, the studio was shuttered and empty, though in a chance encounter with a kindly ranger with a key I was shown around, and he gave me one of Emery's left-over advertising cards. I missed out on the Emery Kolb experience but felt his presence while I peered through the window from where he had photographed thousands of

¹ Edmond V. Malnate, “A catalog of primary types in the herpetological collections of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (ANSP)”, *Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, Proceedings*, Vol. 123 (1971), p. 345.

² The film, not titled and variously edited over the years, adds views from the Kolbs' other canyon explorations. It was first shown on national tour, then for more than 60 years at the Kolb Studio on the South Rim, as often as four times a day. Emery narrated it himself before audiences in the studio auditorium, but in his later years, after introducing it, resorted to a recording. It can be viewed online at <https://archive.library.nau.edu/digital/collection/cpa/id/61149/> (last accessed August 20, 2024).

tourists lined up for their mounted start down the Bright Angel Trail. I was on a mule there once, too, but there was no photographer in the days after Mr. Kolb; no historical remark, no pause either. We just plodded past the studio and on down the trail. Cloppity clomp; it was my first experience mounted on a large animal. It was wonderful. Somehow I wound up with a cabin to myself at Phantom Ranch. I spent the free afternoon retracing my steps along Bright Angel Creek and made a short exploration up narrow Phantom Creek. These were my Academy days, and I used the time to continue a bit of research into the distribution of the living mollusks of the Canyon.

The chase I was on was leading me virtually around the world. At first this was exclusively along the shelves and on the tables of libraries and bookstores. Decades later I was surfing the electronic waves of the web. It's one thing to (as I would) occasionally hike and boat there, or fly over the Canyon (and into it, as one once could), or to wander the rims, or sit with a drink watching the scene as a guest at El Tovar or Grand Canyon Lodge; but it's quite another thing to be one of those people who spends a lifetime exploring the Colorado's riverlands through what has been published about them (around the world, no less), to read about livelihoods, impressions, and goings-on. Then in my case particularly, I wound up being one of those contributing authors and editors—from historical bits to scientific studies—all the while being a basic bibliographer chasing down everyone else's work.

Bibliographies entered my life avocationally and professionally. For Grand Canyon it was a passion of unrestrained fascination and an eagerness for more, further fueled by indulgent perseverance. It wasn't just the "who-what-where-when" of publication but more fully their places in the history of the Canyon and how they were received. I knew others might be interested in those things so I had to find all I could—not just books but articles, and films, and so on, and on. The motivating purpose was of course to make the consolidated information available. The underlying purpose was to ensure that everything possible was gathered before these items, flung wide in time and place, vanished in the slipstreams of barely noticed or outdated publications or were dimmed by unfashionable interests, changed historical perspectives, and fickle technologies. Fifty years on, I am little closer to a finish than when I began, so it must outrun my life. To perchance quote the person who first ever saw the Grand Canyon, "Damn."³

³ "I pictured the predicament of the first man who ever saw that Canyon [. . .] I'll bet he said 'Damn.'" Chester Theodore Crowell, "'Straight down to China', a tale of mules and thrills in the Grand Canyon of Arizona", *The Independent* (New York), Vol. 105 (June 4, 1921), p. 602.



THE BIBLIOGRAPHY was supposed to be restricted to the Canyon. It would have been so much easier had I just stuck with that. But the Canyon is not just the chasm; it is its lands 'round about, and the people there, and all the things that they did and all the things that they discovered and all the things that others gained from their presence and activities—everything. This embraces five centuries of Western incursions, which is nothing compared to Indigenous Peoples' presence from time immemorial. Where to turn first? One learns patience; the method will evolve.

The vast Canyon has a river, which neither heads nor ends there. As I followed its course the area of interest lengthened and broadened to encompass the entire Lower Colorado River country, from Glen Canyon Dam to and into the Gulf of California. It was all about historical, cultural, ethnological, and academic activities along this stream, on its surrounding lands, by all of its peoples, Native and infiltrators alike. Then, to be sure to embrace all the ways the river affects this region, I saw that the bibliography's coverage also had to run off to the West, following a wayward river into the Salton Sink and the Imperial–Mexicali valley that spans the international boundary. All the subjects as which I was chasing for the Grand Canyon country had to be there, too, with some new ones like agriculture, horticulture, husbandry, irrigation, farm laborers' rights, and trans-boundary water use and sanitation.

So then, why is Glen Canyon Dam a bibliographical barrier? Where's the Colorado's Upper Basin in this bibliography? As one follows the river's course upstream from the dam, it branches again and again. Substantially large and mostly-inhabited tributary basins come together, and as one parts from the Colorado Plateau and reaches into the Rocky Mountains there are large tributaries to them in turn—in all, many more in number and more widely dispersed than which are found along the desert journey up from the gulf through the Grand Canyon. Each branch spins its own carrousel of cultural, ethnological, historical, and academic influences. I would have started too late to confidently chase all that, so far from the Grand Canyon without a connection like the Colorado in the Salton Sink. Besides, my own personal experiences, travels, and book-buying and reading have not ventured much into Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming even though I've set foot in all of the Lower Forty-Eight. Neither have I have earnestly joined with others who know a lot about these fascinating rivers and lands and who have lived lives there. I am continually amazed to hear the stories and questions and answers about the places and goings-on in the Upper Basin; there's just so much going on up there. But that's for another lifetime; not mine, now.

I have had it relatively easy because downstream from Glen Canyon the Colorado picks up few significant tributaries. I give a little bit of bibliographical lip service to the Paria River. All but the encanyoned portion of the Little Colorado River where it becomes an arm of the Grand Canyon, and all but the confluent portions of the Virgin, Bill Williams, and Gila Rivers, are beyond the scope of this work. I run with and browse alongside the main river without the distraction of having to follow its big tributaries far up to learn their own involved histories in print. It was difficult enough for me to tail the Colorado on its occasional natural and accidental breakouts to refill the Salton Sea and thus to swell the bibliography with all the natural and human histories down there. (Frankly, had I known in advance of all the ancillary history on the whole Lower Colorado below Grand Canyon, I would have stuck with the Canyon. But here I am, fifty years on.)

Thematically, my intended bibliography of “just Grand Canyon geology” flared from one shining point into a supergiant star, swelling and engulfing other bibliographies and indices, and commonplace works, and the entire run of the *The New York Times*, and obituaries and memorials, and works for people with impairments, and works by and for young people, and fiction, and verse, and travel, and river guides, and administrative affairs, and social works of all kinds, and health and safety, and archaeology and cultural resources and preservation, and Native American peoples’ activities and concerns, and the physical environment, and biology and ecology, and the earth sciences, and audio-visual works, and audio works and musical scores, and lone images in print, and computer and interactive media, and reviews of publications and products, and a newspaper guide, and marginalia (explained, which is better than the murky “Miscellaneous” rag bag usually resorted to)—and to this add voluminous introductory notes and essays, and an entire volume devoted to maps of six centuries with chorographical notes and illustrated textual commentaries, and a third volume about all the other Grand Canyons of this and other worlds with all the Grand Canyon analogies, metaphors, euphemisms, and similes that I could find!

Fascination, indulgence, obsession. Patience. I was asked by more than one person how I did it. I replied, surely unsatisfactorily, “you just take the time.”



IN THE LATE '90s I wanted to change the informative but starchy and lackluster title, “*Bibliography of—*”, to “*The Grand Canon*” and demote the otherwise informative “B” word to a subtitle. “Bibliography” is a word that is an effective repellent to those who might disdain peda-

gogic productions, so I sought an attention-grabber. *The Grand Canon* was for the play on words, too—*canon* (pronounced like “cannon”) versus *canon* (pronounced “canyon”). The latter was for a long time a widely used typographical fallback that, with “Grand Canon” and other “canons,” ignored the cedilla of the original Spanish *cañon*. I saw the overall work as *a canon*. Since there was nothing else like it, I hoped that I could thus escape the uncomfortable brand of conceit. A canon affords that which is essential guidance, counsel, or support, one definitive or recognized for its authority. It’s a shame that ecclesiastical communities have so elevated the word “canon” that it’s now difficult to encounter or appreciate its etymological variant meanings beyond those of spiritual concerns. But I retrieve canon’s other-worldly connotations, even if they are pedestrian compared to canons of scripture and clerics.

Starting in 2000 the bibliography was now going to be an online database rather than a monographic bibliography in print. This was something new and exciting—which I could update as frequently as was necessary—thanks to the foresight of the Grand Canyon Association (today the Grand Canyon Conservancy), which as its forerunner the Grand Canyon Natural History Association had published the two print editions of 1981 and 1990. I had envisioned a grand roll-out on a CD disk, but that idea exposed my technologically short vision. When the online database did arrive, it was aboard its own URL, grandcanyonbiblio.org, which ran with the Association’s own grandcanyon.org. The Association linked to it from its website and announced it with spiffy, colorful postcards. The clear focus was the Grand Canyon. Even in my own mind, I confess, the “Lower Colorado River” remained kind of an afterthought to the Canyon, though that content of the bibliography rapidly succumbed to comparable concentration. I was nevertheless dissuaded from using what I thought was a more resounding title, “*The Grand Canon*,” by a more sensible publications manager who was mindful that users might not be so etymologically in the know, so it remained (ho hum) the “*Bibliography of—*”.

In time, I realized that the technology being used to drive the database was faltering, that the database probably was not going to survive. If it did fold, there would be nothing in its place except the very outdated print monographs—with all the additions and emendations to them vaporized. ColdFusion was the culprit, the software power behind the bibliography, which I had nothing to do with. I limped along with the problems for several years using a program developed for me years earlier to upload new sets of citations and batches of corrections or deletions, emailing for help whenever the operation crashed the database, which it did more and more frequently. The database was grand, but groaning. Conscious about what might seize up the site, I avoided some things, particularly the act of deleting multiple citations at once. The

program, once capable of handling that, could not do it except impractically one deletion at a time with a time-consuming complete refresh after each. The fixed glitches in the software would recur on some future uploads, too. “Why” was both beyond me and not my job to find out. I was finally stopped cold when staying in touch with a third-party technology person had become dodgy. After one too many crashes and near non-resurrections of the database, I drew the line.

The “Internet Edition” had had a fifteen year run—a damned good run at that, growing since 2000 by about 50,000 citations and probably even more edits. Then it was inert, usable but no longer updated, until 2021 when the plug was pulled. By that time, the Grand Canyon Conservancy’s newer staff had not known of the bibliography that had been under their wing for 40 years, or for that matter that I was the person behind it. The 21st century and its brief moments of social media were in full swing; the boundlessly useful but intellectually starchy series of ample “Monographs” was something for “dusty” library shelves. (Little will raise the ire of a librarian or an archivist more than to call their collections “dusty”; it’s a favorite, though ill-advised, term among journalists.) Times change. Onward, but don’t forget!

The demise of the database was a relief to me, actually. I knew that it was being used, but I also was keenly aware that the bibliography in my hands was now far larger, more correct, and as a whole more reliable than the constellation of data fields online. Fortunately, ten years earlier I had begun to restore the monographic presentation of the bibliography. This at last was [THE GRAND CANON](#). While the online database still existed, I produced the first two editions (2012, 2015) as PDF-formatted, searchable book-like presentations on CD and DVD disks, for those who preferred to use a “whole” bibliography that looked like one and not rely simply on cursory “returns” from database queries that might or might not be structured sufficiently. Its only real problem was that the monograph was now *really huge*, but I could not see abandoning it in favor of a database that effectively made the whole invisible. To help avoid the *hugeness* problem, and to help individual users who might not be interested in “the whole” anyway, I planned to make the bibliography’s 32 individual parts also separately available.

Late in 2018 I was about to retire from decades of museum-collections work and occupations in libraries and archives, so I prepared the Raven’s Perch Media website with its tidy URL, <https://ravensperch.org>. It was to be the home of [THE GRAND CANON](#) but it soon grew into a source for other bibliographical and historical products that pertain to the Grand Canyon and the Lower Colorado River. In 2019, the third edition made its entrance as a PDF on the new website—the whole bibliography *plus* its 32 individual parts (and then some). In 2022, a fourth

edition was posted online, now expanded to three volumes—Volume 2 was a separate *Cartobibliography* and Volume 3, *Grand Canyon: Colossal Mirror*, was created from what before had been a simple appendix devoted to other named “Grand Canyons” of the world and other worlds and a full complement of analogies, metaphors, euphemisms, and similes that use the term “Grand Canyon.”

It was apparent to me that the main bibliography, despite being already divided into numerous topically arranged parts, should be further parsed into reference works to be useful to specific groups of people. For example, the biology and ecology citations, grouped in one part, could be used to produce discrete bibliographies on the many subdisciplines represented among them—ornithology, ichthyology, and botany for starters. I also devised separate historical bibliographies for Native Americans (arranged by tribe), administrative affairs (reorganized by agency and unit), and the historical Hoover Dam (alone), and still more compilations for people who are specially interested in topics that are too specific to reasonably segregate as main parts of [THE GRAND CANON](#).

Raven’s Perch also includes historical overviews, on research topics that had not been tapped before. My favored example, if I may promote it before other Raven’s Perch products, is an account of the run up the Colorado River in 1858 by the expedition under Lt. Joseph C. Ives aboard a purpose-built little steamboat, *Explorer*. Whereas the trip and its events are widely known, this historical look was as seen from the perspective of the steamboat’s engineer, Andrew J. Carroll. For 160 years all we knew was that he was “A. J. Carroll of Philadelphia,” that he likely worked for the Philadelphia firm that built the iron and wood steamer—and that was it. Here he came more to light as witnessed in the published journals of two of the expedition’s principal members, Lt. Ives and (in translation from the German) Balduin Möllhausen, because Carroll left no record of his own. I also chased the phantom engineer to his Irish and Philadelphia origins, found his given name, and trailed his journey West with the steamboat kit, where on the Colorado he earned the sobriquet “Captain Iron” from his expedition mates. He is now a person alive.

As for the raven, I am infatuated by these mischievous marvels of the bird realm. They may be “nuisances” to some people, but Native Americans find the bird’s trickery and play useful for teaching cultural legacies and moral tales. I’ve watched them on river trips, sneaking into camp at dawn to shop around the sleeping owners of unsecured edible and attractive things, or swooping in to police the beach sands when the boats finally left camp. From a room at El Tovar Hotel I watched one arrive quietly to a chair back on the porch, scrutinize a salad plate-sized

breakfast Danish, skid a few times while stretching one leg onto a glass table to lean way in to steal it, and fly off with it to a tree where he (or she) advertised the feat with pride.



The Raven's Perch logo itself comes from the aforementioned nineteenth century adventurer, naturalist, and artist Balduin Möllhausen. He painted an Ives expedition camp scene from 1858 near Grand Canyon that incorporated a watchful raven atop a dead tree. The view was transformed into a lithograph for publication in Lt. Ives' official report in 1861, published as a U.S. Congressional document, from which I cropped the perched raven. I wonder what Möllhausen would think of my purpose (much less the technology I used) to, raven-like, grab from his artwork. *Danke, gnädiger Herr*. Some years later, while working on a translation of Möllhausen's account of the expedition's venture between the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon—another Raven's Perch production—I was delighted to discover that he had written about that very scene. Möllhausen, himself perched in a nearby tree, recalled, “a couple of ravens croaked morosely on the bare branches of a dried-up fir tree as they waited impatiently for our departure, so that they could scout around the abandoned campsite for fat morsels.”⁴

I know that the Raven's Perch website will disappear eventually—“nevermore” to Poe's ear—but its essential contents, designed as downloadable PDF books rather than as shape-shifting web pages, have a better chance of surviving, and, perhaps, they may even have been printed out (which I encourage). Elsewhere I've referred to such material as “light gray literature,” the flotsam of items downloaded or printed out from websites that may no longer exist.⁵ But frankly, despite my embrace of the technological world and faith that it will exist and grow in unimaginable leaps if civilization continues, I am unable to imagine what the content of today's digital world will be like even a century hence; or for that matter, how humans (and their technological assistants or overseers?) will interact with the things that we have today. If anything, that world must accommodate legacy and perpetuating paper libraries and digital resources alike; human history is just too rich and too long to forego the former. One might imagine that Leonardo da Vinci or Benjamin Franklin would approve of today's world were they to wake up in it. Would they—and we—feel the same in five centuries more? (If you are taken

⁴ In translation here. (The lithograph is reproduced in “About the Raven's Perch Colophon”, <https://ravensperch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/RP-Colophon.pdf>.) Möllhausen's original watercolor painting is now in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art (Fort Worth, Texas); it is digitized online at <https://www.cartermuseum.org/collection/character-high-table-lands-1988146> (last accessed August 16, 2024).

⁵ Earle E. Spamer, “What a woven web: Archives, websites, and the coming legacy of ‘light gray literature.’” *Provenance*, Vol. 20 (2004 [for 2002]), pp. 59-71.

aback trying to comprehend the year “2525” consider that the view backward to 1525, being history rather than future, seems not to be so unimaginable.)

Bibliographies are, frankly, largely uninteresting to a readership who may not be comfortable with such clinical tools, and to publishers they are almost wholly uneconomical. One may complain that no one “reads” a bibliography. But in the preface to the 4th Edition of *The Grand Canon* I first presented my case that one *can* and *should* sometimes treat a bibliography as reading material. Bibliographies are *not* simply a look-up tool. They can be mined; they can inspire, and they can draw attention to what might not be so noticeable. They can re-present things from it in new formats and contexts for different users. But it takes a *reader* to make this happen.

I envision applications of what euphemistically is called Artificial Intelligence (AI), by which the raw data of a bibliography might be stretched, dissected, analyzed, and rejiggered to draw out new presentations and analyses that deliver data in modified ways, for different audiences, or perhaps even in ways not now imaginable (although AI’s somewhat knotty debut reveals some untrustworthiness). But in this special case it all has to depend first on that raw source, the bibliography, which even can convey data through special typographies, not to overlook the mixed use of non-Latin orthographies and citations in multiple languages. It’s not all text-only like in a database; typography and language deliver information, too. Then if there are annotations, these too have to be analyzed in context with the citation. I present these as challenges for AI. I hope people will try it out. More to the point, I hope that people will agree that bibliographies *are* more than lists and will use that concept to advantage, for uses and people not yet known.



SO THAT’S WHERE WE ARE, fifty years along, on the cusp of paper scholarship and digital analytics. The contrast of techniques and products within one adult’s lifetime (mine) is astonishing. All that I had intended was a conventional bibliography, a fairly unremarkable where-to-go-to record of citations—author, date, title, source, period. My methods at first were basic, something someone from a century earlier would recognize. I even began blind-sided by the “traditional” scholarly form of citation to which I had been introduced by reading scientific journals, using only initials for authors’ given names, and employing sometimes-mysteriously abbreviated serial titles. Readers might not appreciate H. Berg who in 1907 helpfully cited *Österr. Z. f. B. u. H.* He accepted that those in the know would understand that he referred to *Österreichisch Zeitschrift für Berg- und Hüttenwesen* (Austrian Journal of Mining and Metallurgy)! Abbreviated

citations are the residue of vintage presumptuous scholarship and hand-typesetting short-cuts. There's no master list of "accepted" abbreviations for serial titles anyway, even though various disciplines have offered their own—differing—lists for authors to follow. By the time that my second edition came around I had gotten all that out of my system. I used people's given names wherever possible and spelled out all serial titles in full, to help users who might need the complete information.

I captured information on pieces of paper, standing at library shelves, sitting cross-legged on the floor in the aisles, or finding an empty table to spread out upon. Often I stood awkwardly in book stores, juggling a book or a magazine, scribbling a citation for something I did not or could not buy. Then (this being the twentieth century) I stood at xerox machines of all brands and abilities, copying thousands upon thousands of pages over the years; some of it for free (actually or surreptitiously), otherwise rolling coins into those machines that gobbled them up as cheaply as five or ten cents per page (I would get rolls of quarters from the bank—something else that dates me). I don't think I once destroyed a spine or shattered a brittle, acidic page (some library patrons are careful). Many of these citation-captures would eventually also append annotations and explanatory notes. That need grew in tandem with other work, as I also compiled eight annotated bibliographies and reference lists of Grand Canyon geology and paleontology that were published 1982–1992 by the Geological Society of America in the economical, less user-friendly medium of microfiche (all of which in a quarter century GSA would scan for commercial digital re-release as PDFs).

In those days software wasn't much of a consideration. It was pretty basic for word-processing and not yet very widely available; for non-numerical data it was not expected to be analytical by itself. In fact, the manuscript for the first published version of the bibliography was prepared before I ever owned a computer⁶ (this was in 1981, a paperback with a solid black cover, not my choice, but it was dressed up by an artistically moody black-and-white photograph of Canyon weather). I rolled paper through a typewriter, with a carbon copy (maybe two, I don't recall) for assurance against loss or another use. It was to be the second in the Grand Canyon Natural History Association's "Monographs" series. A typesetter somewhere retyped the darned thing—what a tedious, probably boring job that must have been. Galleys (look it up) were made for proofing, which, mailed to me, I read yet again and marked up with a pen.

⁶ Personal computers were only just then appearing on the market. Ironically, at that time I worked as an editor for a firm that published frequently updated computer-technology reports. For quite a while we wrote our reports on typewriters, and typesetters retyped it all for publication.

The second edition (1990) was an improvement—enter software. I owned a computer now and had access to a laser printer, so I created the pages myself (I used WordPerfect in those days), which were used as so-called “camera-ready copy” for offset printing. This time around I also included essays, some of them requested from authors in various fields to go along with the corresponding part of the bibliography. It even won second prize in a contest of publications from National Park Service cooperating associations; not bad for *a bibliography*! The volume was produced as a loose-leaf binder (color: “metallic mauve,” not my choice but at least it too included an illustration). This theoretically allowed for updates such as its 1993 supplement (that promptly filled the binder, so that was that). The pages were also photo-imaged for microfiche (one of those things, supposedly more convenient than microfilm, that was going to change how researchers and librarians did things but who just tolerated it). In addition, the text-only keystrokes—devoid of informational niceties like italics and introducing goofs where characters with diacritical marks and other symbols were digitally misunderstood—were borrowed to distribute the bibliography on digital disks (“floppies,” so-called then, the flexible 5¼-inch variety), another progressive idea that circled down the drain. In use the digital bytes were monotonized by monochrome CRT displays (look it up). I personally migrated a few of the disks on request, to the later non-flexible 3½-inch containerized disks (defiantly still called floppies), which was more drainware.

The database version of the bibliography began when I submitted my word-processed master file to the Grand Canyon Association in 1999—by mail, on a floppy. Someone was hired to finagle the format into data fields that became the database; and the user end of things was created by technology people for interaction on the web. Thereafter I uploaded corrections and updates through software that was readied for me, which as I said worked for a while but after fifteen years didn’t work so well. (Ah, well!) I don’t rely so heavily on others now, with a bit less technological sophistication and yet hopefully with some measure of approbation. At least [THE GRAND CANON](#), all of it, is there for all.



[THE GRAND CANON](#) is a time capsule. Here is a lot of stuff that people have produced about the Grand Canyon, the Colorado River, and the lands all around it. So *rely* on the bibliography. Take the time. *Read it*, even. One might scoff that one may as well read a dictionary, but by looking through these pages, even if not on a hunt for anything specific, what catches your eye? Users might predictably jump to the names of the nobles and familiars of Grand Canyon and Colorado River history—but that’s too easy; one knows them, knows what will be found, and

would be surprised to not find them. Then again, maybe there will be a few newish details to go along with those works. Or, more telling, a citation *nearby*, like browsing a library or bookstore shelf, may alert one to something different but equally and productively interesting. Then there are people and publications that may be peculiar. Go and see. A database would return what is expected or hoped for; a reader recognizes the intriguing and discovers the unexpected.

THE GRAND CANON is a tour guide. It tells of things in the babble of 114 languages from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe: people, places, sounds, sights, smells, tastes, narratives, chronicles, memoirs, findings, reports, anecdotes, tales, fibs, statements, lessons, discoveries, debunkings, summaries, sermons, legends, poems, opinions, laws, rumors, announcements, pronouncements, speculations, assertions, dogmas, suggestions, novelties, resolutions, decrees, repetitions, petitions, pleas, beliefs and aliefs, truths and falsities (depending upon the writer or the reader); all presented in books, booklets, serials, pamphlets, maps, musical scores, transparencies (which include movies of the celluloid type), records (the kind for phonographs, but also the kind that are paper and photographic), and bytes (invisible, but they generate things that we humans can engage). Experiencing, sharing, and cultivating these citations is the reward of *reading* a bibliography. If one obtains the items, their thousands of points condensed therein will be disclosed. If you do embark on a reading, the perspective of the citations will with time very likely wondrously change when they are re-read as we, too, and the world around us, age.

Read! Explore! Often!

— EARLE SPAMER
pronounced *spah-mer*⁷

⁷ Not only is this note a matter of family respect, but after my time the name is bound to be uncorrectably mispronounced. It retains the German back vowel “a” as in “spa” or “father”; it is not “spammer” nor “spaymer” although in England at least the latter is preferred by some Spammers there. Further, in this current age of digital “spam”, a pejorative term, I have experienced a form of cultural censure when my email messages are robotically rejected due to a mistaken connotation with “spammer”, sometimes misspelled “spamer” (though why a true spammer would advertise himself openly is beyond me). Twenty years ago, my personal plight even was mentioned by an information technology columnist (Reid Goldsborough, “Prevent Spam Filters From Blocking Legitimate e-mail,” *in* “Personal Computing” syndicated column in electronic and print media, October 29, 2004). (An online-readable text of this article was found more recently, August 20, 2024:

<https://www.diverseeducation.com/home/article/15080306/prevent-spam-filters-from-blocking-legitimate-e-mail.>)